1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

like this, then you cut the inside, then you get another stone and work it inside so that it is smooth.'

Then he went back to his home and fetched a spear and a bow and arrows. Then he went alone to the bush. He was sorry about his trees. He said: 'Oh, why should they all know about my trees?' He took an arrow and shot it into the tree; that is why the *tʃiniv* tree has many holes in it, so that people have to stop them with putty nut. The man wanted them all to have hard work to stop them with putty. The arrow stuck in the tree, presently it fell down; since then all the *tʃiniv* trees have holes in them, and now the people have to put putty into them.

Materials. Several different varieties of tree may be used. The one universally preferred, on account of the straightness and suitable size of its trunk, and the softness of its wood, making for ease in working, is that mentioned in the legend, called, in the Petats dialect, *uertsil*, and in that of Kurtatchi *tʃiniv*; in the latter case the same word is used for the finished canoe, which at Petats is called

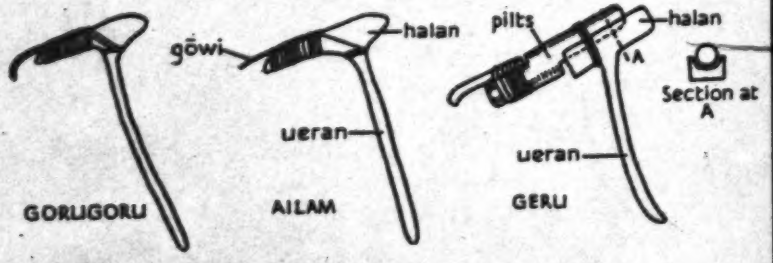

FIG. 16. Tools used in making a dug-out canoe.

dzini. The tree is tall and slender, with rather smooth bark, which strips off in large slabs. There is a milky sap under the bark when it is first stripped, and the same milky fluid exudes from the stems of the leaves when they are broken off. The wood is white and so soft that one man can fell a *tʃiniv* tree by himself, unless it is a very large one.

Tools used. (The native terms are in the Petats dialect.) In the olden days, stone implements were used. Fire has never been employed to hollow out the log. Nowadays the work is done with metal tools obtained from traders, rehafted in the native fashion, probably much as the stone implements were hafted of old (Fig. 16). They use, besides the ordinary trade axe, which they call a tomahawk, a straight-bladed adze (*ailam*) and an adze with a curved

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

blade (*gorugoru*). Both are hafted on to handles of which the *halan*, i.e. the part supporting the blade (*gōvi*), is in one piece with the part held in the hand (*ueran*). This latter is long, fairly thin, and rather roughly straightened. The blade is bound to the handle with strips of the tough outside rind of the creeper *Lygodium dichotomum* (*aisam* in the Petats dialect, the same as *asam* in the Kurtatchi dialect). The second form of adze has a curved blade, hafted in the same manner. There is another tool (*geru*) consisting of a curved blade fixed on to a piece of wood (*pilts*), which revolves in a groove cut in the handle, so that the blade can be turned round. The straight part of the canoe is trimmed roughly with the axe; the shaping of the ends, the keel, and most of the inside work is done with one or other of the adzes, and the corners and curved pieces with the *geru*.

Method of Construction. Dug-out canoes are very numerous on the island of Petats, the position of which is favourable to their use. At one time during my three months' residence six were in process of manufacture simultaneously. At Kurtatchi they are less in evidence, the coast being much rougher, and are generally kept at the fishing-hamlet of Tarongen, on the other side of the peninsula, in the shelter of the bay. Two were made by the Kurtatchi people while I was there. The method is the same in both places, but as I watched most carefully the process of manufacture at Petats, my description hails from that island. A job of this sort is usually carried out rather spasmodically, and the time required varies a good deal. Possibly more than the usual amount of concentration was put into the work done on this canoe, at least during the initial stages, because its maker was anxious to show me what he could do. I have known a half-finished canoe to be left untouched for weeks at a time because the craftsman did not feel inclined to work on it. But with this proviso, the time is more or less representative.

October 28. Tree felled. The one selected as suitable had a trunk of 2 feet in circumference about 4 feet above the ground, where it was felled, and continued the same size for a considerable part of its height. The upper portion of the trunk was cut away, leaving a piece which they said measured 4½ *ya* (*ya* = a fathom or span, roughly about 6 feet) to be converted into the canoe. My measurement made it a little over 25 feet.

October 29. The bark was stripped off, except for a piece on the keel. The outside was trimmed roughly to shape; the portion

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

hands, the right hand nearer to the tool. The hands were held at about the level of the waist. The sides were trimmed almost straight, not curving outwards with the contour of the tree. The thickness of the sides was tested by feeling with the hands one inside and one outside. A layer was taken off the whole length of the side of the canoe in about twenty minutes. Most of the day was spent on this trimming.

Up to now, the work had been carried on in the bush, just where the tree fell. This evening, however, the canoe-builder decided to bring it down to the beach. He dragged it single-handed for part of the way, and then left it for the night.

November 5. The builder and another man carried the canoe to the beach and trimmed it, by turns, all the morning, improving its shape and smoothing its rims.

At this point he apparently became tired of the job; there were also several things going on in the village to distract his attention. Nothing more was done to the canoe until the evening of November 20, when he measured with a fish line the position for the holes for holding the cross-pieces to which the outrigger-booms are lashed.

November 21. The holes were made with a modern brace and bit, the canoe lying on its side. Three holes are needed on each side. They must be exactly in the centre of the canoe, about 3 inches from the rim.

November 22. Three sticks (*sokau*) were pushed through the three pairs of holes. The *sokau* pass right through the hull, and project about 2 inches on either side of it. Two outrigger-booms (*kikilin*), about 9 feet long, were laid athwart the hull and lashed to the outer *sokau* on each side, projecting a little beyond the hull on the starboard side, the greater part of their length being on the port side. The space between the booms was filled with tightly packed transverse poles (also called *kikilin*) of the same length as the booms. The centre pole was lashed to the centre *sokau*, forming a platform, about a foot wide, braced by cross-bars (*pinin*) running parallel with and just above the rim of the canoe on each side. The number of poles varies from six to ten according to the size of the canoe. In answer to my question, the canoe-builder said that the proper length for the booms was *gā sia pa lim*, a span and an arm (*alima*, shortened to *lim*, means either arm or hand). The length varies very little in the different-sized canoes (see

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

potter then lays it in her palm, takes up a smooth flat stone (*rako*) in the other hand, and holding the stone with her four fingers on the inside of the lump, and her thumb on its outside, she hollows the ball into a bowl shape with quick, short sweeps of the stone, turning the clay in her hand as she runs round the edge (Pl. 58*a*). This base is then put aside to dry, and another is begun.

At the next session the potter takes a handful of clay in her wet

FIG. 24. Spatula used in pottery making.

palm, and kneads it with the fingers of the same hand. One of the bases prepared at the previous session is then picked up, and the clay very quickly and deftly applied all round its edge, adding about an inch to its height (Pl. 58*b*). No attempt is made to construct a sausage-shaped roll before applying it to the pot; the amount required is squeezed out between thumb and first finger. The thumb is kept inside the pot, and the four fingers curled round the outside. The first finger is pressed down as the clay fits round the pot, leaving a crinkled appearance which is afterwards smoothed out with the hand dipped in the broken pot full of water which stands by the worker's side. One handful of clay went round a pot about 12 inches in diameter. On a larger pot, if the first handful is not enough to go round, a second lump is taken, the ends are made to overlap the first strip for a couple of inches or so, and the joins completely smoothed out. The result of this process is to provide the pot with an edging about an inch deep and from ½ to ¾ of an inch thick at the top, projecting slightly on the outside and smooth inside, like the rim of an ordinary flowerpot. The pot is then put aside again to dry. The potter will keep a dozen or more going at once, at two or three different stages of construction, putting another layer on each in turn.

At the next session the potter takes up the pot and lays it across her knees. She then takes the flat stone in her left hand, and in her right a small wooden spatula or beater *taksak* (Fig. 24), which she dips into the pot of water beside her. With quick light strokes she flattens out the rim of clay, holding the stone underneath and

Each village has, amongst its older men and women, some with a very fair knowledge of native medicines and also, unfortunately, one or two with a secret knowledge of poisons. The administration of curative and prophylactic medicines is usually accompanied by elaborate rites which the patient must rigidly observe. Contraceptives are commonly used by the women and one herb is claimed to be what might be termed a "contra-contraceptive," *i.e.*, after a woman has been barren for several years, as a result of taking a contraceptive, this herb will make her fertile again. When epidemics occur villages as yet untouched will place small sticks, leaning outwards, on the various roads to ward off the arrival of the spirit of sickness. The sticks are smeared with the spittle of betel-nut, pepper and lime. If the cry of a certain night-bird is heard over a village where a patient lies dangerously ill, it is usual then for any further attempt to combat the illness to cease. Death has spoken. The bird's call is looked upon as the inevitable token of death, and the relations commence to gather together their presents for the dead in readiness for throwing them into the coffin or grave. It is strange, but the cases where to my own knowledge the bird's call has actually preceded the death of a patient have been numerous.

DRUM SIGNALLING ON PORORAN ISLAND

Pororan legend has it that in the days of long ago (*manus*) before drum signalling had been introduced a strange resonant noise was heard coming from the bush by the men of the village one evening. Half fearful investigations were made and it was found that the noise came from a swinging branch beaten by the wind upon a hollow tree. From this sprang the idea of the *tui*, or wooden drum, which is used so extensively throughout Buka, Bougainville and other Melanesian islands.

The making of these drums in the early days, before steel implements were introduced, was a long, tedious and almost sacred performance. In many of the *tui* the aperture at the top is but an inch to an inch and a half in width extending the full length of the drum, while the outer circumference measures in many cases as much as eight feet six inches. Sharpened clam-shells, fastened to spear hafts or long sticks were the only tools used for the work.